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Arrangements made for return of students from Kyrgyzstan: Provincial cabinet constitutes committee to sort out issue of federal levies in Balochistan

Cabinet approves establishment of Forensic Science Agency, Women Police Station in Sibi & Pharmacy Council besides approving bills for prevention of early age marriage and domestic violence against women; Education of Qura'an declared compulsory for Muslim students

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Balochistan cabinet has approved to bring the federal levies force in the administrative structure of Balochistan levies force and constituted a committee to decide future of the federal levies and the related matters.

The committee would be headed by the Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langove with provincial ministers Sadar Sarfraz Domki, Noor Muhammad Dummer and Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran.

The cabinet also accorded approval to the establishment of Forensic Science Agency and Women Police Station in Sibi.

Besides, the cabinet approved bills for prevention of the early age marriages and domestic violence against women.

In addition to this, the cabinet approved formation of Balochistan Pharmacy Council and increase in the renewal and issuance fees of the private security companies in the province.

This and similar other information were shared by the spokesman, Government of Balochistan, Shahid Rind while briefing the media persons about the decisions made in the provincial cabinet here at the CM's secretariat on Wednesday.

The two-day meeting of cabinet was chaired by the Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

About the cabinet meeting, the spokesman of provincial government informed that the cabinet meeting remain continued for two days. During the course of meeting, some 30 points were discussed and important decisions made on different administration matters and about public interest.

Shahid Rind said that the cabinet laid emphasis on improving governance in education and health sectors agreeing to bring about reforms in the province.

He said that the cabinet members emphasized in the cabinet meeting that improvement in service delivery is necessary particularly

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QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti chairing Provincial Cabinet meeting

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

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

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

In the same series of

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

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

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

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



QUETTA: Balochistan Assembly's Speaker, Abdul Khaliq Achakzai pen message in a condolence book placed at Consulate General of the Islamic Republic of Iran following the death of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi.

Speaker & Deputy Speaker BA visit Iranian Consulate for condolences

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai and Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Ms. Ghazala Gola visited the Iranian Consulate here on Wednesday.

During the visit, the Speaker and Deputy Speaker expressed condolence to the Deputy Consul General and other staff of the Iranian Consulate on sad demise of Iranian President, Ebrahim Raisani and other dignitaries of Iran in the helicopter crash.

They also penned heartfelt condolence and

tributes to the late Iranian President and others in the condolence book.

It may be mentioned here that the process of condolence remained continued on second consecutive day, Wednesday over the sad demise of Iranian President and his companions in the Helicopter crash at the Iranian Consulate.

The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti and other personalities belonging to different walks of life have already visited the Iranian Consulate for offering condolence and feteiha for the departed souls of those died in the Helicopter crash.

Bruised PTI demands judicial probe into attack on Raouf Hasan

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

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

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

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

Two shot dead in Quetta

QUETTA (INP): Unidentified gunmen shot dead two people and injured a minor girl here at Sariab Road on Wednesday and fled the scene, police said.

According to details, the incident took place near Awami Pump where unknown armed men sprayed bullets at three people.

As a result of firing, two people were killed on the spot while a girl sustained bullet wounds. The assailant escaped the scene of crime.

The bodies and injured were shifted to civil hospital for medico-legal formalities.

Police said that the incident seems to be outcome of personal enmity. However, a case was registered against unidentified attackers and investigations were kicked off.



QUETTA: Former Chief Minister Balochistan and President National Party MPA Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch and a delegation of SST Forum meeting with Education Minister Raheela Hameed Khan Durrani



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

Pakistan firmly upholds one-China principle: President

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari

has reiterated that Pakistan firmly adhered to the one-China principle as the country always chooses to stand on the right side of history.

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

This was the first such interaction of President Zardari with any foreign media after being re-elected

for the second time in March.

Recalling the rapport between the previous leaders of the two countries, Zardari said, "My late father-in-law, Pakistan's former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto told the nation to look East, to look towards China."

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

"Taiwan is part of China. There's no other way," the president said,

adding that Pakistan will always stand with China and safeguard China's core interests.

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

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

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

Dialogue only way to solve problems, says Gilani

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

He expressed these views during his visit to the mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah to pay homage to the Father of the Nation on Wednesday.

The acting president laid a floral wreath and offered feteiha.

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

Speaking to the media, the acting president said

Q u a i d - e - A z a m Muhammad Ali Jinnah was a true and genuine leader of the Sub-Continent and our youth should be aware of the fact that he (Quaid) was the true leader and he had created Pakistan therefore we should not be running after a 'black cat in a dark room'.

Reshuffling of senior civil bureaucracy continues in Balochistan

Independent Report

QUETTA: The reshuffling of senior civil bureaucracy is continued as administrative secretaries of three more departments were replaced in the province.

According to an official notification issued here by the Services and General Administration Department, the Secretary Communication and Works Department, Kambar Dashti has been transferred and

posted as senior Member Board of Revenue while Secretary Planning, planning and development, Lal Jan Jaffar has been posted as Secretary C&W.

Similarly, Secretary Health, Abdullah Khan has been transferred and posted as the Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs and Saleh Muhammad Baloch, who was awaiting posting orders, has been posted as the Secretary Health.

PM meets Turkish VP, FM, Emir of Qatar

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

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

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

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

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

Over 9100 SIM cards of non-filers blocked

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

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

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

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

Earlier, the FBR decided to impose an additional 87.5 percent withholding tax on non-tax filer phone users on mobile top-up.

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

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

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

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

Prime Minister Shehbaz expressed solidarity with the Iranian brethren and sisters at the critical juncture in history and reiterated Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening the bonds of friend-

ship and brotherhood with the Government and the people of brotherly Iran.

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

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

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

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



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

Central, provincial govts taking steps to ensure good governance: Governor

Mandokhail exhorts PML-N parliamentarians to keep close & effective rapport with masses of their constituencies

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has stated it is our responsibility to fulfill promises made with the people and meet their expectations and adding exhorted the parliamentarians of PML-N to keep close and effective coordination with people of their respective constituencies every time and under every circumstances so that they are well acquainted about their issues and resolve them timely.

The Governor was speaking to a delegation of

the provincial ministers and members of provincial assembly who called on him under leadership of the Speaker Abdul Khaliq Achakzai here at the Governor's House on Wednesday.

The Governor stressed that the time has come to serve the masses by the elected representatives.

He urged all the elected representatives to serve the masses with dedication and high spirit.

He said that the federal and provincial governments are taking serious steps for ensuring good governance and stabilization of the economic system.



QUETTA: Commissioner Quetta Division Hamza Shafiqat meeting with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail

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

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

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

In the meeting, provision of technical support to Election Commission of Pakistan through UNDP Election Support Programme, fake news, misinformation and other important issues were discussed.

"Election campaigns in

Pakistan have changed in the digital age," the minister said adding the rise of social media had given a new shape to political engagement.

In the present digital era, where the way for digital-based strategies was being paved, there were also challenges of fake news, misinformation and disinformation. "Fake news, misinformation and disinformation are the problem of the whole world," he maintained.

The minister informed the members of the UN mission that Election Commission of Pakistan was working on the digital front as per the requirements of the present era. He said it was very important to provide awareness to the voters about the election process.

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

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

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

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

It was agreed that the

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

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

Ministry of education apprised the coordinator that FDE had banned plastic use in schools besides

other activities including kitchen gardening, awareness campaigns, incorporation of climate change in national curriculum through national curriculum council etc.

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

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



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visiting CDA Hospital.

CDWP okays Edu Ministry's plan for establishing 6 Danish Schools in GB and AJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training will establish six Danish Schools, three each for GB and AJK, for which Planning Commission in its meeting of Central Development Working Party (CDWP) gave go ahead for immediate design and preparation of the project.

Official sources said on Wednesday that the Planning Commission had agreed with the Education Ministry's proposal that its federal responsibility was to support such unique educational initiatives for Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).

The Planning Commission has also appreciated the views of the Education Ministry that existing development framework has to cater for national educational emergency issues in GB, AJK and newly merged districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The sources further informed that the Education Ministry would be the sponsoring agency with co-ownership with GB and AJK governments.

The site selection of proposed Danish Schools will be done in consultation with those regions, they added.

The sources informed that the Ministry of Edu-

cation would ensure regional governments presence in its Project Monitoring Unit for effective monitoring. The projects will be handed over to the area governments after completion and its model of governance will be adopted from the existing cadet colleges model.

They said that after completion of the schools, admissions would be open for poor and brilliant students.

"This project will be a centre of excellence in these areas. We will present the detailed design in coming months before the Planning Commission, the sources added.

Interior Minister visits Capital Hospital

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

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

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

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

Raheela, a cancer patient, cried while telling Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi about the disease.

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

director to provide best treatment to the patient.

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

The minister also met the doctors and asked their problems while he inquired about the facility of free medicines and free tests to the patients.

The minister inspected water plant, dialysis unit, and other wards of the hospital checked the records of dialysis patients.

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

He also inspected MRI, CT scan, x-ray and angiography room and met the patients under treatment in the medical block and asked for medical facilities.

Taking urgent notice of the elderly woman's complaint for not being checked-up by the doctors, he directed the Executive Director to treat the elderly patient under his supervision.

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

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

Responding to a calling attention notice moved by Senator Dr. Zarqa regarding the recent appointment and amendment of rules by the interim Rector of COMSATS University Islamabad, he said that a search committee constituted by the President would soon submit its recommendations to the appointing authority.

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

Appointment of Rector of COMSATS university in final stage: Tarar

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He said that the com-

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

Senator Dr. Zarqa alleged that the interim Rector of COMSATS University, who was authorized by law to manage day-to-day affairs, had misused his authority.

However, the minister refuted these allegations, stating that no violations had been made by the interim Rector.

He also contradicted the claim that any changes had been made to the rules and regulations of the university.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) has launched a short Japanese language course for skilled workers to get jobs in Japan as basic knowledge is must for job seekers who are interested to work in Japan. An official source told APP here on Thursday, that OEC as a manpower promotion public agency which was playing a vital role to provide maximum

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ISLAMABAD: Citizens enjoying leisure time at Fatima Jinnah Park in the Federal Capital.

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

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

"These relief kits,

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

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

"This initiative was executed in close collaboration with the National Disaster Management Authority and the respective provincial governments of KP and Balochistan through the Hayat Foundation," the statement concluded.



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

PTDC MD says:

Improvement in Pak ranking reflects tourism sector's growth

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) Managing Director Aftab Rana on Wednesday felicitated the nation on significant improvement in Pakistan's ranking in the World Economic Forum's Travel & Tourism Development Index that reflected growth in its tourism sector.

"This is the result of collective efforts of public and private sector partnered under the umbrella of PTDC to make Pakistan an outstanding tourist destination," the PTDC managing director said in a news statement.

He said Pakistan had improved its ranking in the WEF's Travel & Tourism Development Index for 2024, moving up to 101st place.

"This is a significant improvement of 20 positions compared to its ranking in 2019," he added.

Aftab said the joint

efforts of the PTDC, provincial tourist departments, private sector partners, tourism educational institutions and development partners such as the World Bank had played a pivotal role in the tourism sector's growth.

He further said that recently the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) had also acknowledged Pakistan's outstanding performance in tourism, marking a remarkable 92 percent recovery to the pre-pandemic levels in 2023.

The country experienced a 115 percent surge in foreign tourist arrivals compared to the previous year, signaling a robust comeback in the post-Covid-19 era, he noted.

Aftab Rana said that the PTDC during the last year had actively participated in six major global tourism events such as World Travel Mart London, ITB Berlin, New York

Travel and Adventure Show, Arabian Travel Mart Dubai, Seoul Travel Mart Korea, and Travel Mart in Vietnam, fostering essential B2B connections with foreign tour operators.

"A special tourism promotion campaign 'Salam Pakistan' has been launched to project the soft image of the country at global and national levels," he added.

He said the initiatives of PTDC on the National Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (NTTIC) and development of the National Minimum Standards for Tourism and hospitality sector had also played a key role in building the capacity of industry stakeholders to work for the quality assurance in the tourism industry.

Aftab Rana said that there was a strong need to improve the safety and security of visitors, increase air connectivity of Pakistan with rest of the world.

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

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

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

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

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



and issues of the public as well as police officials during the Khuli Kachehri (Open Court) held at his office and senior police officers were also present on this occasion.

During the Khuli Kachehri, he listened to the

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

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

He emphasized that the police would not leave any stone unturned to secure the lives and property of the citizens, adding "Such interaction would be continued in future to provide maximum relief to the citizens."

Technical fault at 132 KV grid station causes power suspension to 17 feeders

ISLAMABAD (APP): Technical fault in the power transformer at 132 KV grid station G-5 on Wednesday caused temporary power suspension to various areas of the federal capital connected to 17 feeders.

Soon after the power suspension, GSO and operation teams of Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) rushed to the spot to clear the fault, said an IESCO spokesperson in a statement issued here.

He said the power supply to 12 feeders out of 17 feeders has been restored. However, power supply to feeders including PM Secretariat, CBR, K-Block, Civic Centre and Supreme Court while efforts were being made to

clear the remaining feeders has not yet been restored, he added.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) IESCO Dr Muhammad Amjad and Chief Engineer Muhammad Aslam Khan were personally monitoring the restoration work at the grid station.

The IESCO regretted the inconvenience due to the technical fault.

Meanwhile, the IESCO operation teams have cleared technical faults at the 132 KV transmission line circuit Satellite Town, MES Zero Point and I-11. After clearance of the fault uninterrupted power supply was provided to all areas of Rawalpindi.

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PUC lauds int'l recognition of Palestine, calls for global support

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) on Wednesday expressed gratitude to Norway, Spain, and Ireland for officially recognising Palestine as an independent state.

The Council emphasised the importance of this recognition and voiced hope that the rest of the international community would follow suit, leading to an end to the ongoing violence and brutality in the region. PUC Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi made a heartfelt appeal to the Eu-

ropean countries, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the broader international community urging these nations to recognise Palestine as a free and independent state and to support the Palestinian people in their struggle against oppression and violence.

He highlighted the dire need for global intervention to address the longstanding conflict between Israel and Palestine. Ashrafi called for an end to the violence and the establishment of peace and justice in the region.

CDA chairman directs increased water supply in densely populated areas

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

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

Chairman CDA, while praising the performance of the water supply wing, urged the staff to maintain their hard work and dedica-

tion to ensure that citizens do not face water problems.

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

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

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

Around 500 students takes admission in AIOU

ISLAMABAD (APP): Almost five lac students have enrolled in spring semester of the Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), including more than 500 international students. Now the Allama Iqbal Open University's admissions for spring semester 2024 have been closed. Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, has been focusing on improving student facilities, examinations, and admission procedures. As a result, there has been a significant increase in the number of admissions for the spring semester of 2024 compared to the autumn semester of 2023. Vice Chancellor has instructed the Directorate of International Collaboration and Exchange to offer full support.



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

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Thursday May 23, 2024

Bulldozed bill

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

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

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

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

Defamation is a societal problem, not something that concerns the Punjab government alone. The journalists' community had merely asked the Punjab government for a week to reconsider the law and arrive at a consensus. Meanwhile, the opposition had suggested certain changes to the law, some of which, it seems, could have improved it considerably. By involving these two stakeholders in its deliberations, the government in Lahore would have had the opportunity to make the law fairer and acceptable to everyone. That it chose to push them aside suggests a disinclination to honour the democratic principles of the legislative process and, instead, a tendency to impose its will on the people.

This disregard for the opposition and other dissenting voices — now seen in multiple successive governments — is the primary reason why the Pakistani political process seems unable to deliver. The Punjab government must withdraw this dangerous bill and engage with other stakeholders. There is still time.

Zahid Hussain

More than two months after taking power, the Shehbaz Sharif government has yet to find its moorings. It is like a rudderless ship with many helmsmen trying to steer it in different directions. It has been lurching from one crisis to another, thanks to the complete absence of leadership. We are witnessing an extremely chaotic situation: a tottering dispensation is struggling to prevent an impending systemic collapse.

With the recent order of the Supreme Court suspending the ECP decision of granting extra reserved seats to the ruling coalition, the latter has been dealt a serious blow. Not only has the move reduced its strength in parliament, it has also opened a Pandora's box. The ruling has raised a whole lot of legal questions about the recent elections in the Senate and other constitutional positions.

The loss of the coalition's two-thirds majority has further limited the government's capacity to legislate and take critical policy decisions. The ongoing court battles and a

vociferous opposition challenging the legitimacy of the political set-up have worsened the predicament of the tenuous coalition. The establishment's increasingly intrusive role has further diminished the credibility of the political dispensation. The situation is rightly being described as military rule with a civilian façade.

Equally damaging is the widening disarray within the cabinet and the failure to chart a coherent policy course on critical issues. The elevation of Ishaq Dar to the position of deputy prime minister has widened the cleavage. Having the blessing of Nawaz Sharif, Dar, who is also foreign minister, has overshadowed the prime minister. As was expected, he is now trying to find his way back to running economic policy.

Dar's increasing assertiveness in pushing his viewpoint has already put him at odds with the finance minister's outlook on privatisation and other financial issues. He has publicly disputed Muhammad Aurangzeb's opinion that it is not the job of the state to run commercial enterprises and the more quickly state-

owned enterprises are privatised, the better it will be for the country's economy. He seems to be stuck on preserving the state's control over so-called national assets.

Curiously, the foreign minister is trying to influence matters that don't come under his domain. Dar's conflicting views also bring into question the Shehbaz Sharif government's stated policy on privatisation and other economic reforms. Such statements by the deputy prime minister are likely to have implications for the government's negotiations with IMF for a longer and larger bailout package.

It is not surprising, then, that in this confusion the government has yet to define how it plans to move forward on privatisation and economic reform in general. While there have been some positive indicators that show inflation is being contained, the economy is nowhere near the path of recovery. There is no sign yet of the much-touted \$5 billion Saudi investment materialising. Foreign investment needs a conducive economic environment and a long-term

economic policy that is still not in place.

Governance is another weak point of the PML-N-led government. Its mishandling of the protests in Azad Kashmir calling for a reduction in wheat and electricity prices was a glaring example of its incompetence. Instead of dealing with the angry protest rationally, the administration resorted to the use of force, resulting in fatalities. Although the government accepted the protesters' demands, the damage had been done. Such gross mishandling turned the situation volatile in an extremely sensitive region.

Meanwhile, an unsteady government is also using coercive action to silence dissent. It is now working on a draft law to regulate social media on the pretext of preventing "hate speech and disinformation". But most observers see the law as a move to curb the freedom of expression. The popular social media platform X remains blocked after widespread allegations of manipulation during the Feb 8 general elections.

Meanwhile, the government has formed a National Cyber Crimes Investigation Agency to probe

electronic crimes. Most digital rights activists describe it as yet another attempt to stifle criticism online. All these moves demonstrate how fearful the government is of the power of social media, which has become the most effective forum for dissenting voices, given the restrictions on mainstream media.

It is not just about the media; the judiciary, too, is reportedly being intimidated by the intelligence agencies. The pressure on the judiciary has mounted after six judges of the Islamabad High Court sent a letter to the Supreme Judicial Council detailing their harassment at the hands of the intelligence agencies. In a recent letter to the Islamabad High Court chief justice, Justice Babar Sattar reportedly alleged "intimidatory tactics" on the part of the establishment after he issued notices to the heads of intelligence and investigation agencies in the audio leaks case. He also complained about the breach of his family's personal data, in a blatant violation of the law.

Such pressure tactics have been applied on judges to get favourable

rulings in the past too. But now the judges are speaking out. It is no secret who is behind the campaign against an upright judge who dared to speak out. Some politicians also appear to have been unleashed on the judiciary. It all seems to be part of a campaign to browbeat judges who refuse to toe the line. What is most shocking is that the law minister and some other members of the cabinet came out in support of the elements involved in the intimidation of judges.

The increasing harassment of the judges has intensified the clash between the establishment and part of the judiciary that refused to bow to pressure.

The Supreme Court has issued suo motu notices to two lawmakers, seeking an explanation from them for their anti-judiciary vitriol — with little effect so far. It is now turning into an open stand-off between the two state institutions, adding to the chaos. It certainly doesn't bode well for a dispensation struggling to establish its legitimacy. - Courtesy Dawn

A state of chaos

Warrants for war criminals

Rafia Zakaria

Just as the fog was lifting over the mountains of the Iranian province of East Azerbaijan to reveal the remnants of the weekend catastrophe, another bit of startling news burst onto the scene. Over at the International Criminal Court (ICC), chief prosecutor Karim Khan, who has been investigating the war crimes taking place in the Israel-Palestine conflict, issued a statement announcing that he had requested arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant. In the same statement, Khan announced that he had also requested arrest warrants for Hamas leaders Yahya Sinwar, Ismail Haniyeh and Muhammad Diab Ibrahim al-Masri.

Unsurprisingly, Khan's statement was met with criticism from all sides. Hamas leaders accused him of equating the victims of the war with the perpetrators. Israel's deputy attorney general in turn denounced the action, calling it completely

"divorced from facts" and accused it of making a "mockery of the heinous charge of genocide". The request for warrants is now with the judges of the ICC, who will evaluate whether the evidence submitted by Karim Khan is adequate for the warrants to be issued. If they decide that there is adequate evidence submitted in support of the arrest warrants, these will then be issued. Once issued, the warrants can be enforced in any one of the 124 countries that are signatories to the treaty that created the ICC, which is "the world's only permanent international court with a mandate to investigate and prosecute genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes".

Israel is not a signatory and does not accept the jurisdiction of the ICC. However, if the warrants are issued then Netanyahu or Gallant could be arrested in any one of the 124 countries that are signatories. In his statement, Khan stated: "Notwithstanding any military goals they may have, the means Israel

chose to achieve them in Gaza — namely, intentionally causing death, starvation, great suffering, and serious injury to body or health of the civilian population — are criminal."

Khan's statement also holds Israel responsible for deliberately causing the hunger crisis in Gaza. The "total siege over Gaza", with the cutting off of humanitarian aid, water, medicines and the items needed for human survival, is the basis of violation of international humanitarian law and of the charge of war crimes. Linked to these is the "collective punishment against the civilian population of Gaza", where the indiscriminate bombing of hospitals filled with patients and compounds crowded with displaced persons were targeted with impunity.

In turn, Hamas leaders have been indicted based on evidence collected at the sites of the Oct 7 attacks, areas which Khan had visited, along with documentary proof and survivor interviews. The Hamas attacks led

to about 1,200 civilian casualties — a figure far outnumbered by the tens of thousands that the Israeli forces have killed and continue to kill with each passing hour. Despite this, Khan has stated, it is crucial that the ICC be seen as applying the law to both sides. If the arrests are actually made and the leaders from either side tried for their crimes, those that have killed several thousands would automatically be subjected to far greater penalties.

The question, of course, is whether such arrests or trials would ever take place. In terms of which side has more to lose, it is certainly the Israelis. Hamas is already classified as a terrorist organisation by many countries. Its leaders facing arrest warrants may abridge their travels to some extent, but their movement is already greatly limited by the classification of the organisation. They do not represent the government of a recognised state.

The situation is different on the Israeli side where Netanyahu and Gal-

lant are treated as dignitaries wherever they go. Unlike Hamas leaders, they have never faced any kind of curtailment on their movements as they attend conferences and convenings and make state visits. The issuance of arrest warrants would mean the sudden cessation of this kind of freedom of movement and the label of an "indicted war criminal", awaiting arrest and trial, would chase them from place to place. Countries that are signatories to the treaty would have to either provide embarrassing assurances to the war criminals that they will not face the consequences that the criminal court has deemed for them or allow them to be arrested. Such dealings will undoubtedly be mortifying for a state that has become arrogant and cruel as it rains unending devastation on the civilians of Gaza.

Every step of the ICC's investigation and prosecution of this war is, in fact, a danger to the state of Israel, which was created after World War II as part of a moral imperative to provide a country to the persecuted Jews, who had borne much torment under the Nazis. Israel has now occupied the tormentor's seat as it decimates the Palestinians. However, judging by interviews and news reports, Israel now seems rather befuddled at its new shameful status as the world's emerging pariah. Karim Khan's warrants especially if they are granted by the judges of the ICC, as one expects they will be, are bound to turn Benjamin Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant into pariahs on the international stage, which will likely spell the end of their already fragile political positions at home. At that point, they may be even more vulnerable to arrest and trial. The week is not yet over but the end of many leaders has either come or is being predicted. The world is transforming in a sudden fashion — it is changing not over years and decades but within hours, days, weeks and months. Living in this period of history, we are learning that events can be frightening and hopeful at the same time.

Preparing for crises

Naveen Hussain

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Unusual trifecta

Mahir Ali

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

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

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

For the Iranians, the transport back to Tabriz relied on an old, US-designed helicopter, flying through hilly terrain in

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

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

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

Reagan set-up.

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

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

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

Maryam directs authorities to prepare comprehensive plan for prison reforms

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

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

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

The chief minister approved a project to

revamp Bakshi Khanas and lock-ups across Punjab. She also gave in principle approval for the establishment of women's jails in Faisalabad and Rawalpindi.

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

Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Information &

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

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday paid a surprise visit to Holy Family

Hospital where she inspected various wards including pediatric emergency and Mother-Child Block. The chief minister directed the hospital administration to keep vigilant for instant health services to the patients.

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



KARACHI: Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori in a group photo with the delegation of Longi Solar at Governor House.



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

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

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

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

He expressed these views during a study tour of the 35th Senior Management Course

participants at the Governor's House in Peshawar. The participants included officers from various service groups and ministries. The Governor apprised them on his constitutional obligations, powers, and responsibilities, and answered their questions about security, higher education, law and order, Afghan refugees, and political and economic stability. The Governor said that after the merger of tribal areas into the province, infrastructure in various sectors had not improved, leading to concerns among the tribal people and youth about taxation and employment opportunities.

Azma expresses deep condolences to acting Iranian Consul General

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

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

She said that the entire Pakistani nation is deeply grieved over the death of the Iranian President and Pakistan equally shares the grief of their Iranian brothers and sisters. "We express our deep sense of sorrow and condolence over the martyrdom of the Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian."

Azma Bokhari said that the President of Iran Ebrahim Raisi was a great Mujahid and a revolutionary leader of the Islamic World. The sympathies of the Pakistani nation rest with the Iranian brothers and sisters in this hour of grief, she added.

PA Deputy Speaker visits site of Arts Council

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

Deputy Commissioner Zaheer Anwar Jappa and Director Arts Council Sajjad Hussain was also present on this occasion. The Deputy Speaker visited various sections of the under-construction building and inspected the progress.

He emphasized the importance of completing the development work of the Bahawalpur Arts Council building on time with high standards.

He assured that funds would be allocated for the remaining construction work of the building under the Annual Development Program. He expressed that the beautiful building of the Bahawalpur Arts Council would be a gift for the local residents and individuals associated.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

He mentioned that around 180 federal departments and agencies fall under the Federal Ombudsman's jurisdiction. Ejaz Qureshi noted a 24% increase in complaints, indicating growing public

trust in the Ombudsman's office. The Ombudsman emphasised that their office resolves complaints within 60 days, and citizens do not need to hire lawyers to have their issues addressed. He also stated that the Federal Ombudsman's office is enhancing coordination with Provincial Ombudsman offices to provide maximum relief to citizens.

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



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

Government committed to improve treatment facilities in hospitals: Health Minister

FAISALABAD (APP): Provincial Minister for Health Khawaja Salman Rafiq on Wednesday said that the government under the dynamic leadership of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz was committed to improve medical treatment facilities in all hospitals on modern lines.

During his visit to Allied Hospital-I here, he said that huge funds were being spent on up-gradation and revamping of government hospitals where nursing staff would also be recruited soon to overcome their shortage in the hospitals.

He said that the Punjab Government was contemplating for providing Health Professional Allowance which would help improve performance of this sector. He visited various sections of the hospital and directed to complete revamping work till June 10.

He said that Rs.2.7 billion were being spent on up-gradation of this hospital and this project would be completed on war-footing. Medical Superintendent (MS) Dr Muhammad Faheem Yousuf briefed the Health minister and said that 68 ventilators were in working condition in the hospital while pediatric ward was being upgraded.

KP CM distributes scholarship certificates among 65 students

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

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

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

deserving and talented students for graduate and undergraduate programs.

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

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

and 7 PhD scholarships worth Rs. 197.47 million, have been awarded in the top universities of the world. Addressing the ceremony, the chief minister congratulated the students awarded with scholarship certificates and hoped that they would move forward with more dedication and hard work and play well at their part in making the name of the nation bright at international level. On this occasion, the chief minister announced increase in the seed amount of Endowment Fund from Rs 940 million to Rs 2.00 billion aimed at awarding more scholarships as well as supporting the orphan students in the province.

Three die in separate incidents in DI Khan

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Three people were killed on Wednesday in separate incidents took place in different localities of Dera Ismail Khan district.

According to details, a dumper fell into Chashma Right Bank Canal (CRBC) near Saidu-wali area of Tehsil Paharpur resulting, driver drowned into the canal while four other people were rescued by the local people. Later, the body of the deceased driver was also fished out by the local people.

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

Princess Zahra Aga reaffirms commitment to regional development in GB

GILGIT (APP): Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Haji Gulbar Khan on Wednesday warmly welcomed Princess Zahra Aga Khan, daughter of His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan on her arrival in Gilgit. The CM expressed his gratitude for the Aga Khan Development Network's contributions to Gilgit-Baltistan, particularly in the areas of health, education, infrastructure, and social progress. He requested the expansion of the network's health and education programs to all districts, with a focus on remote areas, and sought cooperation in addressing

the shortage of medical professionals and equipment. Additionally, he emphasized the need for teacher training and sought the Aga Khan Education Service's support in enhancing education standards and accessibility. The Chief Minister extended an invitation to Princess Zahra Aga Khan to visit Gilgit-Baltistan and conveyed his best wishes to His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan. In response, Princess Zahra Aga Khan stated that she would review the health and education projects in Gilgit-Baltistan.



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

KP govt announces to present budget on May 24 before federal govt

PESHAWAR (Online): KP government has announced to present budget on May 24 before presentation of budget by federal government.

Provincial cabinet will meet on May 24 for approval of budget. It will be presented in the assembly after approval from cabinet.

KP Finance minister Aftab Alam has said it is first time in the history that provincial government will present its budget before federal government. Opposition should talk positively instead of resorting to criticism for the sake of criticism.

Two people die after falling into sugarcane tank

LAHORE (APP): A tragic incident of death of two people took place in Chung area on Wednesday. According to the police, two people fell in a sugarcane tank after they slipped and could not keep balance. On receiving the information, the rescue teams reached the spot and started rescue operation. The rescuers took out the bodies from the sugarcane tank.

DIG Operations meets business community

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

LCCI President Kashif Anwar, Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry, Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt and a large number of members including presidents of various markets participated in the meeting. In his address, LCCI

President Kashif Anwar said, "We sit safely in our homes due to the presence of our law enforcement agencies." He said that the police lay down their lives to protect the citizens. He said that there is a very good relationship between the police department and the LCCI. He said that during the previous visit of DIG (Operations), few issues were discussed including police verification of employees and workers in factories and markets. He said that this project should be taken forward as a pilot project and in this context Lahore Chamber needs the help of the police.

Journalist Nasrullah not to be shifted to Karachi due to critical condition: Sharjeel

KARACHI (APP): Senior Minister for Information Sindh Sharjeel Inam Memon on Wednesday said that condition of injured journalist Nasrullah Gadani is critical therefore doctors in Rahimyar Khan were not allowing him to be shifted to Karachi. Senior Minister said he was in constant contact with Dr. Jabbar Khattak regarding the condition of

journalist Nasrullah Gadani. In his post on the social networking site the X, Memon said rescue 1122 ambulance was also ready to shift the injured journalist Nasrullah from Rahimyar Khan to Agha Khan Hospital Karachi from the day one but doctors in Rahimyar Khan were not allowing him to be shifted to anywhere else due to his critical condition.



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

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed the relevant authorities to take the required steps for granting the industrial status to the gems and precious stones sector of the country.

The prime minister, chairing a meeting on the gems and precious stones sector, called for necessary legislation and consultation with the provinces and the private sector to uplift the sector besides immediately activating the Gems and Jewelry Development Company.

He said that most of the country's areas particularly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir were rich with immense natural resources which needed to be fully exploited.

Prime Minister Shehbaz also called for ensuring the international certification of stone products and their display at international exhibitions.

He also instructed for launching training programs to promote value addition of the stone

products, and carry out the geological mapping of KP, GB and AJK on the availability of precious stones.

The participants of the meeting were told that a strategy was being formulated to promote investment in the fields of gems and rare stone.

Federal ministers Ahad Khan Cheema, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Jam Kamal Khan and Dr Musaddik Malik, State Bank Governor Jameel Ahmed and relevant senior officers attended the meeting.

Gold rates dip by Rs 300 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 300 and was sold at Rs 248,200 on Wednesday compared to its sale at Rs 248,500 on the last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 236 to Rs 212,791 from Rs 213,048 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs 195,059 from Rs 195,295, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten-gram silver remained constant at Rs2,850 and Rs2,443.41, respectively. The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$3 to \$2,415 from \$2,418.



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



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

Industries Minister meets Korean envoy, discusses bilateral cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain on Wednesday met with the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Park Ki Jun to discuss the bilateral cooperation.

The delegation from leading South Korean companies also accompanied the ambassador, said a news release issued here.

The minister said that both countries enjoyed historical and cordial relations and engaged in multifaceted bilateral cooperation in many areas including in the field of economic and culture.

The matters of mutual interest, including bilateral cooperation and the challenges faced by

Korean companies in Pakistan also came under discussion. The minister assured the visiting delegation for prompt resolution of all pending matters. Rana Tanvir apprised the visiting ambassador that the government had taken a number of steps to boost up industrial activities in the country. He said that government had announced Automotive Industry Development and Export Plan (AIDEP 21-26) under which a number of incentives had been offered for investment in automobile sector.

As a result of this policy, 13 new manufacturers have started local assembling of renowned automobile brands in Pakistan.

RDA inflows rise to \$7.831b in April 24

ISLAMABAD (APP): The inflow of remittances under Roshan Digital Account (RDA) has risen to US \$7.831 billion by the end of April 2024 as compared to US \$7.660 billion by March (2024) end, according to the latest data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The data showed that the inflows of remittances during the month of April were recorded at US\$ 171 million as compared to US\$ 182 million in March and US\$ 141 million in February 2024.

These accounts provide innovative banking solutions to millions of Non-Resident Pakistanis (NRPs), including Non-Resident Pakistan Origin Card (POC) holders, seeking to undertake banking, payment, and investment activities in Pakistan.

The number of accounts registered under the programme also rose by 9,585 to 689,650 in April 2024 from 679,792 accounts in March 2024.

By the end of April, overseas Pakistanis have invested US \$317 million in Naya Pakistan Certificates, US \$523 in Naya Pakistan Islamic Certificates, and US \$33 million in Roshan Equity Investment.

Japan's core machinery orders up 2.9% in March

TOKYO (APP): Japan's seasonally adjusted core machinery orders in March rose 2.9 percent from the previous month, marking two consecutive months of increase, government data showed on Wednesday.

Private-sector orders, excluding those for ships and power equipment, closely watched as a leading indicator of corporate capital spending, stood at 913 billion yen (5.83 billion U.S. dollars), according to data released by the Cabinet Office.

The government agency raised its basic assessment of machinery orders, saying there are signs of recovery.

By sector, orders from manufacturers gained 19.4 percent to 473.1 billion yen, while orders from non-manufacturers fell 11.3 percent to 448.6 billion yen, the data showed. (1 yen equals 0.0064 USD)

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PSX witnesses bearish trend, loses 250 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bearish trend on Wednesday, losing 250.10 points, a negative change of 0.33 per cent, closing at 74,956.67 points against 75,206.77 points the previous trading day.

A total of 584,484,020 shares valuing Rs 17.714 billion were traded during the day as compared to 462,304,427 shares valuing Rs 15.87 billion on the last day.

Some 389 companies transacted their shares.

Concerted efforts must to enhance Pak-Indonesian trade volume: Rahmat

FAISALABAD (APP): Bilateral trade volume between Indonesia and Pakistan could be enhanced to three-folds, but the two countries must make concerted and collaborated efforts to achieve the target, said Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma, chargé d'affaires, of the Indonesia embassy.

Addressing the meeting of business community at the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI), he expressed satisfaction over the cordial and brotherly relations between the two countries and said that next year the two countries would celebrate 75th anniversary

of their diplomatic relations in under-construction East Kalimantan, new capital of Indonesia in the island of Borneo. He also mentioned the Trade Expo Indonesia-2024 and said that the business community of Faisalabad must participate in it to give a quantum jump to its trade not only to Indonesia but also to the ASEAN countries.

He said that a large number of tourists visit Indonesia every year but the number of Pakistani tourists was quite negligible. "We must incentivise Pakistani tourists to spend their vacations in the virgin

Govt releases Rs 66.03b for various water resources schemes so far

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government has disbursed an amount of Rs 66.037 billion for various water resources schemes so far under the annual Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) of the current fiscal year 2023-24.

According to the official data issued by the Planning Commission, the government had specified a sum of Rs 110.500 billion for various projects in PSDP 2023-24. Out of the total release amount, the local component stood at Rs 90.367 billion, while the

foreign aid component was Rs 20.132 billion. A sum of Rs 52.235 billion has been spent on various water-related projects so far.

For ongoing schemes, an amount of Rs 20,000 million has been allocated for Damer Basha Dam Project (dam part), Rs 15,500 million for K-4 Greater Water Supply Scheme (Karachi), Rs 10,500 million for the Mohmand dam, Rs 5,000 million for Diamer Basha Dam Project (Land Acquisition and Resettlement).



QUETTA: Central Anjuman Traders Balochistan President, Abdul Rahim Kakar along with others addresses to media persons during press conference held at Quetta press club.

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Petroleum, Musadik Masood Malik said on Wednesday that the government will enhance the indigenous production of petroleum products, including gas and crude oil.

Addressing an energy symposium, he said that the government has put blocks for bidding and is actively trying to attract global players in exploration activities.

He said that Pakistan is open for business and committed to completely digitizing the regulatory process to increase transparency.

Malik highlighted the importance of the TAPI gas pipeline project, which he said would provide cheaper gas. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to ensuring an uninterrupted and affordable energy supply, recognizing it as a top priority. He said that Pakistan currently spends over \$18 billion annually on energy imports.

The minister reassured attendees that

the government is expediting oil and gas exploration within the country and welcomes foreign companies to invest in this sector.

He said that investment processes and information regarding oil and gas exploration have been digitized and simplified to facilitate this.

To reduce electricity tariffs, the government is working on various proposals, he said. By supplying local gas to efficient power plants, the cost of electricity could be reduced to Rs 12 per unit, compared to Rs 24 per unit when using LNG.

He acknowledged the high theft and losses in the gas sector, particularly in Balochistan, where gas losses have increased in Sui-Southern. To combat urban gas theft, modern systems, including comprehensive monitoring of the gas network using technology, are being implemented.

He advocated for increased utilization of Pakistan's abundant

renewable energy resources, especially as the country's solar energy costs have significantly decreased.

He said, that multiple policies have been formulated to boost local production after a long period.

Regarding the TAPI framework, he said that project financing would be jointly provided by Pakistan and Turkmenistan. He highlighted Turkmenistan's vast gas reserves and limited market, primarily China, and proposed that European countries purchase LNG from Turkmenistan to enhance their energy security.

He said that Pakistan has proposed to European countries the idea of purchasing LNG from Turkmenistan, which would provide energy security to Europe. He explained that a gas pipeline will come from Turkmenistan to Pakistan, and gas will then be supplied to Europe via a train.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum & Water Resources, Senator Dr. Musadik Malik addressing at inaugural ceremony of Pakistan Energy Symposium, with the theme "Powering the Future".

Green Energy Transition to help Pakistan build sustainable economy

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

The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) under its Network for Clean Energy Transition organized the virtual conference titled

"Green Financing Summit: Driving Energy Transition through alternate and Green Financing Mechanisms".

In his opening remarks, Deputy Executive Director, SDPI, Dr Sajid Amin said the discourse on clean energy transition was crucial as shift over green energy was the country's journey towards a sustainable economy.

He added that the transition to green energy required huge capital that could not be left alone on the government and the larger firms.

SECP Commissioner launches NBFI & Modaraba Year Book

KARACHI 22 (INP): The Commissioner, Specialized Companies Division, Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), Mujtaba Ahmed Lodhi on Wednesday launched the NBFI & Modaraba Association of Pakistan's Year Book 2023, which contains vital information regarding the NBFI & Modaraba sector.

Held at the Association's office, the launching ceremony was attended by a large number of industry representatives.

The Year Book indicates that despite its challenges, the NBFIs and

Modaraba sector has shown significant improvement, particularly in terms of assets, profitability, dividend distribution and tax payments. The assets of the sector increased to Rs 158,404 million in FY 2023 as compared to Rs 142,918 million in FY 2022. However, the total equity of the sector decreased to Rs 51,518 million in FY 2023 from Rs 55,358 million in FY 2022/23, the decline in equity attributed to departure of a few of the Modaraba members owing to transformation in their business models.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was reported at the port where five ships, Hope Island, Conti Courage, Tethis-7, Al-Thakhira and Advantage Paradise carrying Container, Palm oil, LNG and Gas oil, berthed at Container Terminal, Liquid Terminal, Eley Terminal and Oil Terminal respectively on Tuesday.

Meanwhile two more ships, Marathopolis and Torm Venture carrying Container and Gas oil also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on same day.

A total of twelve ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Chemroad Zenith and Flag Filia left the port on today morning, while four more ships.

Rupee loses 08 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Wednesday lost 08 paise against US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.47 against the previous day's closing at Rs 278.39.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market, however, were Rs 277.35 and Rs 280.10 respectively.

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

ISLAMABAD: President Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Atif Ikram Sheikh has said that the government should make the border management system more active to prevent smuggling.

Movement of smuggled goods into the country is affecting tax revenue which can be increased only through prevention of smuggling. We support the government's measures against non-filers in the upcoming fiscal year

budget, Tax should be collected from those who are not in the tax net. Federation President Atif Ikram said that the tax target should be kept closer to reality in the next financial year. The business community is ready to help the government in increasing the tax net. The improvement in the stock market has restored investor confidence and our foreign exchange reserves are also increasing, which is proof that the economy is moving in the right direction.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb calls on by Canadian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Leslie Scanlon.

PR earns Rs. 40.1b in first half of FY-2023-24 Senate informed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has substantially increased its revenue (251%) during the last decade through reforms and improved management, yet it is not sufficient to meet Pakistan Railways requirements mainly due to exponential growth in pension.

The minister said that almost 67% of the total expenditure is spent on pay and pension benefits only. Pakistan Railway is currently the only exception which is maintaining pension on its books while the Finance Division provides financial assistance to Pakistan Railways in the shape of Grant-in-Aid/subsidy for payment of pay and pension.

He stated that there has been exponential growth in pensions since 2016 in the wake of the new Pension Policy/PM Package for in-service death.

It was stated by Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Law and Justice Azam Nazeer while replying to a question in the Senate on Wednesday which was about reformative measures being taken by the Government to curtail the loss of Pakistan Railways.

The minister said that PR earned revenue of Rs. 63.250 billion in FY 2022-23, and received a Grant in Aid/subsidy of Rs. 47.5 billion from the Finance Division which comes to Rs. 110.8 billion.

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ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Privatisation, Investment and Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan calls on by Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, Wada Mitsuhiro.

Minister stresses APMOA collaboration to uplift mining sector

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Minister for Mines and Minerals Sardar Sher Ali Gorchani chaired a significant meeting with officials from the All Pakistan Mine Owners Association (APMOA) to address key challenges and fostering collaboration in the mining sector, here on Wednesday. The gathering provided a platform for in-depth discussions on pressing issues confronting the mining industry. Officials from APMOA delivered comprehensive briefings to the minister, shedding light on the intricacies of coal mining operations and highlighting technical hurdles faced by

stakeholders.

During the session, APMOA representatives underscored concerns regarding dead rent and the complexities surrounding mining lease durations.

The minister attentively listened to these challenges and reaffirmed the government's commitment to resolving them through pragmatic measures. Expressing optimism for the future of the mining sector, he emphasized the pivotal role played by coal mining in driving economic growth. He assured APMOA officials of the government's unwavering support and pledged.

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

Monitoring Desk DUBAI: Iran's supreme leader prayed Wednesday over the coffins of the country's late president, foreign minister and other officials who were killed in a helicopter crash earlier this week. Later, hundreds of thousands of people followed a procession honoring the dead down Tehran's main boulevard. Iran's Shiite theocracy views mass demonstrations as crucial evidence of its legitimacy and the people's support. Still, Wednesday's funeral service for President Ebrahim Raisi and others saw a turnout that onlookers described as noticeably lower than the 2020 procession honoring Revolutionary Guard general Qasem Soleimani, who was killed in a U.S. drone strike in Baghdad. Many of the participants said they came to Tehran for the ceremony from other cities and towns across the Islamic Republic, an indication of how those in Iran's capital viewed Raisi, who won the presidency in a record low turnout and later oversaw repeated crackdowns on dissent — including in the wake of the 2022 death of Mahsa Amini that sparked street protests over Iran's mandatory hijab, or headscarf. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who openly wept for Soleimani, also remained composed while reciting the standard prayer for the dead. "Oh Allah, we didn't see anything but good from him," Khamenei said in Arabic, the language of Islam's holy book, the Quran. Iran's acting president, Mohammad Mokhber, stood nearby and openly cried. The death of Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and six others in the crash on Sunday comes at a politically sensitive moment for Iran, both at home and abroad. Raisi, who was 63, had been discussed as a possible successor to Iran's supreme leader, the 85-year-old Khamenei. None of Iran's living past presidents — other than Khamenei, who was president from 1981 until 1989 — could be seen in state television footage of Wednesday's prayers. The authorities gave no explanation for their apparent absence. Following the deadly helicopter crash, Iran set June 28 as the next presidential election.



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

Israeli forces raze parts of Jabalia camp, hit Rafah

Monitoring Desk GAZA: Israeli forces thrust deeper into the Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza on Tuesday, laying waste to residential districts with tank and air bombardments, residents said, while airstrikes killed at least five people in the southern city of Rafah. The Israeli army used bulldozers to clear shops and property near the local market in Jabalia refugee camp, residents said, in a military operation that began almost two weeks ago. Israel said it has returned to the camp, where it had asserted to have dismantled Hamas months ago, to prevent the group from regrouping. Health authorities and Gaza Civil Emergency Service said dozens of bodies were trapped under rubble of houses and on the roads in Jabalia, but were out of reach of rescue teams. "Israel is destroying the camp on the heads of the people, the bombardment never stops, and the world is calling for more food to enter Gaza. We want to spare lives not extra food," said Abu El-Nasser, a resident of Jabalia, who fled to Gaza City. Gaza's Health Ministry says 85 people have been killed and 200 injured in the last 24 hours. Residents and medical officials said Israeli tanks were besieging the Al-Awda Hospital in Jabalia for the third day, and officials at Kamal Adwan Hospital in nearby Beit Lahiya said they were evacuating patients after it was hit by Israeli fire.

DR Congo thwarts Kinshasa 'coup attempt': Army

Monitoring Desk KINSHASA: The DR Congo military on Sunday thwarted an attempted coup near the offices of President Felix Tshisekedi in Kinshasa involving "foreigners and Congolese", the army spokesperson said. The coup bid took place in the early hours of the morning outside the residence of economy minister Vital Kamerhe, in the Gombe area in the north of the capital, near the Palais de la Nation which houses the president's offices. "An attempted coup d'etat has been stopped by the defence and security forces," said General Sylvain Ekenge in a message broadcast on national television.

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

Monitoring Desk LONDON: Former British Post Office boss Paula Vennells sobbed on Wednesday after telling a public inquiry the wrongful conviction of hundreds of postmasters had been caused by errors not conspiracy, and if anything she had been "too trusting" of others. More than 700 local post office branch managers, who were often at the heart of small communities, were convicted between 1999 and 2015. After a faulty IT system called Horizon from Japan's Fujitsu (6702.T), opens new tab led to shortfalls in their accounts. The state-owned Post Office prosecuted them under special powers, despite evidence that it knew of the IT problems.

US pushes for G7 response to China's industrial overcapacity

Monitoring Desk FRANKFURT: US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said on Tuesday that the United States and Europe needed to respond to China's industrial overcapacity in a "strategic and united way" to keep manufacturers viable on both sides of the Atlantic. Yellen told reporters during a visit to Frankfurt that G7 finance ministers shared US concerns about Chinese efforts to dominate clean energy industries, but did not need "detailed coordination" on trade actions following the imposition of steep US tariffs on Chinese goods. "But I do think that the concerns about China's strategy are shared and all I'm suggesting is that given that many countries share this concern, it's more useful to communicate to China as a group," Yellen said. In remarks on the US-European alliance in Frankfurt, Yellen said China's excess industrial capacity threatened both American and European firms as well as the industrial development of emerging market countries. "China's industrial policy may seem remote as we sit here in this room, but if we do not respond strategically and in a united way, the viability of businesses in both our countries and around the world could be at risk," she said.

Palestinian state is recognized by several European countries

Monitoring Desk NEW YORK: Norway, Ireland and Spain have recognized a Palestinian state in a historic move. Irish Prime Minister Simon Harris said on Wednesday it was coordinated with Spain and Norway, "an historic and important day for ... Palestine." Several other European countries have in the past weeks indicated that they plan to recognize a Palestinian state, arguing a two-state solution is essential for lasting peace in the region. European countries are recognizing a Palestinian state while dozens of countries have recognized a Palestinian state, none of the major Western powers has done so. The decisions from Norway, Ireland and Spain may generate momentum. The recognitions mark a significant accomplishment for the Palestinians, who believe it confers international legitimacy on their struggle, especially amid international outrage over the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Here's more on how and why the new European announcements could be important. Ireland, Norway and Spain have recognized a Palestinian state. Several other European countries have in the past weeks indicated that they plan to make the recognition, arguing a two-state solution is essential for lasting peace in the region. Meanwhile, France indicated that it isn't ready to join other countries in recognizing a Palestinian state, even if it isn't opposed to the idea in principle.

Protesters interrupt Blinken's testimony over Israel policy

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken faced criticism from the right and left over Israel policy in Congress on Tuesday, with Republicans accusing the Biden administration of failing Israel and Democrats saying it's doing too little to help civilians in Gaza. Furious protesters interrupted Blinken as he began his testimony before the Democratic-controlled Senate Foreign Relations Committee. There were shouts that he has "blood on his hands," and Blinken flinched from a protester who approached him from behind waving a sign that said "criminal" before security officers carried her out of the room. Blinken reiterated the support of President Joe Biden's administration for Israel, but insisted it was focused on easing the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. "In the Middle East, we're standing with Israel in its efforts to ensure what happened on October 7 never happens again, as we do everything we can to bring an end to the terrible human suffering in Gaza and prevent the conflict from spreading," he said. Blinken was scheduled to appear later on Tuesday before the Senate appropriations subcommittee that oversees diplomatic and foreign aid spending. He returns to Capitol Hill on Wednesday for two more rounds of testimony at hearings of the Republican-led House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee and a House appropriations subcommittee. Republicans criticised Biden for saying this month that he would delay a shipment of bombs to Israel and consider withholding others if Israeli forces launched a major invasion of Rafah.

China says it is willing to improve Vatican ties; Taiwan monitoring developments

Monitoring Desk BEIJING: China is willing to work with the Vatican to improve ties, a Chinese foreign ministry official said on Wednesday following remarks from the Holy See's top diplomat that it wanted to open an office in Beijing. Relations between the Vatican and China's Communist Party leadership have historically been fraught and it does not have diplomatic relations with Beijing, only Taiwan. Indeed, it is one of only a dozen countries to maintain formal diplomatic ties with Taipei, which has watched nervously as Pope Francis seeks to improve ties with China. The Vatican would like to establish a permanent office in China, its top diplomat, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, said on Tuesday, in what would be a significant upgrade of relations. "We are willing to work together with the Vatican to promote the continuous improvement of China-Vatican relations," foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a regular briefing. He added that the two sides have maintained "deep communication on bilateral relations and international hot issues."



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

One killed, 71 injured after severe turbulence on Singapore Airlines flight

Monitoring Desk BANGKOK: One person died and more than 70 were injured on Tuesday when a Singapore Airlines flight from London hit severe turbulence and was forced to make an emergency landing in Bangkok. Flight tracking data suggested the plane dropped more than 1,800 metres (6,000 feet) in just five minutes, causing multiple head injuries to those on board. It is the latest drama involving a Boeing plane, after a fuselage panel blew out of an Alaska Airlines 737 MAX in January as well as two fatal crashes in 2018 and 2019. Singapore Airlines said flight SQ321 took off from London's Heathrow airport and "encountered sudden extreme turbulence" at 11,300 metres (37,000 feet) over Myanmar's Irrawaddy Basin. "We can confirm that there are injuries and one fatality on board the Boeing 777-300ER. There were a total of 211 passengers and 18 crew on board," the airline said in a statement. Kittipong Kittikachorn, the director of Suvarnabhumi Airport, said the passenger who died was a 73-year-old British man. Most of the injuries were caused by blows to the head, Kittipong said. Bangkok's Samitivej Srirakarn Hospital said a total of 71 people had been sent for treatment, six of them severely injured. "We deeply apologise for the traumatic experience that our passengers and crew members suffered on this flight. We are providing all necessary assistance during this difficult time," Singapore Airlines said.

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

Monitoring Desk HELSINKI: The deaths of Iran's president and foreign minister in a helicopter crash have caused a pause in the UN nuclear watchdog's talks with Tehran over improving cooperation with the agency, the watchdog's chief Rafael Grossi told Reuters on Wednesday. "They are in a mourning period which I need to respect," International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Grossi said in Helsinki, where he spoke at a nuclear conference. "But once this is over, we are going to be engaging again," he said, describing it as a "temporary interruption that I hope will be over in a matter of days." Grossi said the IAEA was planning to continue technical discussions with Iran but they had not yet taken place due to last weekend's helicopter crash.

France mobilises police to regain control of New Caledonia airport road

Monitoring Desk PARIS: French police trying to restore order in the island territory of New Caledonia after days of deadly unrest have cleared dozens of barricades that had been blocking the main road linking the airport to the capital, Noumea, a senior official said on Sunday. Around 60 barricades that protesters had put up along the 60 km (37-mile) road have been dismantled but the road is not yet open as debris needs to be cleared, which will take several days, the territory's high commissioner, Louis Le Franc, told reporters. The Tontouta airport is closed because of the unrest on the French-ruled South Pacific territory. Protests erupted last week, sparked by anger among indigenous Kanak people over a constitutional amendment that will change who is allowed to participate in elections, which local leaders fear will dilute the Kanak vote. Six people have been killed and the unrest has left a trail of burnt businesses, torched cars, looted shops, and road barricades, cutting off access to medicine and food. Three of those killed were indigenous Kanak and two were police officers. A sixth person was killed and two seriously injured on Saturday during a gun battle between two groups at a roadblock in Kaala-Gomen, French police said, without identifying the groups. More than 600 police were mobilised to clear the barricades on the airport road, including some 100 gendarmes who are part of a special, heavily armed unit, Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said on X late on Saturday.

UK's Sunak fails to quell early election rumours

Monitoring Desk LONDON: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak failed to stem growing speculation on Wednesday that he might call an early election after ministers cancelled events and either curtailed or delayed foreign trips to attend a government meeting. For most of Wednesday, rumours swirled around parliament that the British leader was poised to call an election — something neither he nor his team would confirm or deny. Earlier, when asked about the rumours, Sunak stuck to his wording that a national election would be held in the second half of 2024. But then foreign minister David Cameron cut short a trip to Albania and the defence minister delayed a foreign visit to attend a cabinet meeting of senior ministers.



A passenger, who was on board the flight SQ321 from London, arrives at Changi Airport in Singapore.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER. The Undersigned invites sealed percentage rates based on composite schedule of rates 2024 Government of Baluchistan and item rates from interested contractors/Firms for the works mentioned below. Tender fee 1500 Deposited in head of account C-02725-02 Through bank Chailan in NBP/State bank of Pakistan E/Money 2% in shape of call Deposit, for each work.

CORRIGENDUM. This office tender published under PRQ No.2377,2378,2379,2380/14-05-2024(TSE No.232405414653, TSE No.232405414653, TSE No.232405414653, TSE No.232405414663, TSE No.232405414663, TSE No.232405414683) wherein Schedule of rates has erroneously been published as "based on Composite Schedule of Rates 2018" which may be read as "Based on Composite Schedule of Rates 2023 on percentage rates". EXECUTIVE ENGINEER IRRIGATION DIVISION PISHIN. PRQ No.2530/22-5-2024. TENDER NOTICE. The POST GRADUATE MEDICAL INSTITUTE QUETTA invites bids from eligible Bidders for supply of following items. TSE-232405424501 Only electronic bid will be submitted, No physical bid is required. Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB.

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

China-Pakistan friendship flourish and prosper forever: Jiang Zaidong

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

In his address delivered at "friendship forever" event celebrating China Pakistan establishing 73 years of diplomatic relations held here at Pakistan-China Center, he said he is very happy to celebrate the 73rd anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan.

On behalf of the Chinese Embassy, he extended his warm congratulations and sincere gratitude to friends from all walks of life who have long been committed to China-Pakistan friendship!

President Xi Jinping said that China-Pakistan

friendship is like a thriving tree with deep roots and luxuriant leaves, he said.

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

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

grown into a towering tree, deeply rooted in the hearts of the two peoples.

Over the past 73 years, leaders of the two countries frequently visited each other like close relatives, guiding the development of China-Pakistan relations.

In 2015, President Xi Jinping's historic state visit to Pakistan elevated the bilateral relations to all-weather strategic cooperative partnership, and set the goal of building an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era, which provided fundamental principles and operational guidelines to the development of China-Pakistan relations.

It has become as solid as rock and as heavy as mountain.



HUB: Leaders and activists of political parties and petrol pump owners blocked the Quetta-Karachi Highway road as they are holding protest demonstration against the ban on Iranian petroleum products, at Winder area in Hub.

US believes in supremacy of human rights, stands with Kashmir cause: Terry Meza

ISLAMABAD (APP): A member of the Texas House of Representatives, Terry Meza has United States of America (US) believed in the supremacy of human rights and advocates for peace, peaceful coexistence, and democracy across the globe. She said this while addressing the Kashmir conference organized by Friends of Kashmir International (FoKI) in Texas, said a press release received here on Thursday.

"We stand with the oppressed against the oppressor, and soon a resolution will be presented in the Texas House to express solidarity with the Kashmiris," Terry Meza said.

While addressing the conference, Chief Guest Hurriyat leader and Vice Chairman of FoKI, Abdul Hameed Lone, said that Kashmiris were not only struggling for their inalienable right of self-determination but also for the completion of Pakistan. He noted that Kashmiris had resisted Indian aggression by making supreme sacrifices for the past 76 years.

Presiding over the Kashmir Conference, social activist Abdul Hafeez Khan (Tamgha-e-Imtiaz) emphasized that it was high time for the United States to play its role in mediating the Kashmir issue. He stated that the hearts of Pakistanis

living in America beat with their oppressed Kashmiri brothers and sisters and that they desired freedom from the clutches of the occupying Indian forces.

Ghazala Habib, the chairperson of Friends of Kashmir International and host of the conference, said that the Kashmiri diaspora would play every possible role in exposing Indian atrocities worldwide.

The people of Jammu and Kashmir seek their basic and internationally recognized right to self-determination as per the resolutions of the United Nations, and the entire world should support them in this noble cause.



ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary S&GAD Mir Liaquat Ali Lehri and leader of PML-N Fareed Afghan meeting with acting Chairman Senate Saydal Khan Nassar.

Romina says: Climate Change ministry initiates GLOF-III project glacial water resources

ISLAMABAD (APP): PM's Coordinator on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam Wednesday said that the Ministry would initiate GLOF-III project to protect the glacial water resources of Pakistan.

In a meeting with Chairman NDMA, Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik and it was agreed that National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and ministry of Climate Change would jointly work on this project.

The both sides reiterated to closely collaborate to overcome heat waves, natural disasters and upcoming floods in the country. It was also decided to formulate a joint strategy to save the wildlife vulnerable species during the upcoming floods.

The Chairman NDMA and PM's Coordinator also thoroughly discussed the upcoming COP29 and it was agreed that the both sides would closely collaborate on preparing of reports, documentaries, recommendations for upcoming United Nations global summit being held in Baku at the end of this year.

DC Jhal Magsi urges doctors to provide health facilities to patients in hospital

QUETTA (APP): Deputy Commissioner Jhal Magsi Syed Rahmatullah Shah on Wednesday urged the doctors that they should play their role to provide health facilities to patients in government hospital. He expressed these views while chairing meeting of health sector of the district.

The DC said that all the doctors and other staff should consider it a sacred duty and be busy in fulfilling their official duties.

He also emphasized to all the doctors that the first priority of the government of Balochistan is to provide free medicines and medical facilities to the poor people in government hospitals and other health centers.

For which the government of Balochistan is using all the resources on an emergency basis so that the poor people can benefit fully from these measures of the government, he said.

He issued instructions to the officials of the health department and said that the total number of staff of (BHU, s) (CD, s) (DHQ, s) and (RHC, s) should be posted in the health centers as soon as possible, prepare a detailed of available medicines, functional and non-functional (BHU,s) (CD,s) and ongoing development projects in the district.



GAWADAR: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti presiding over a meeting regarding Gwadar Shipyard.

Seeks report from Commissioner CM concerned about shifting of Shipyard from Kapar to Sur Bandar in Gwadar

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti has expressed concern about the shifting of Shipyard in Sur Bandar from Kapar area of Gwadar.

The Chief Minister asserted that we would take review of the matter that why the need of reviewing the Gwadar Shipyard Master Plan arises?

He insisted that why all aspects were not reviewed before establishing Shipyard in Kapar area of Gwadar?

While chairing a meeting about the Gwadar shipyard Master plan and related matters here on Wednesday, the Chief Minister sought detail report from the Commissioner that why the Shipyard established in Kapar according to the feasibility report was shifted in Sur Bandar?

He directed to present detail comparison report based on the two-side stance on the review of Shipyard site.

The Chief Minister announced that consultation would be made with all stakeholders before any change in the Master Plan of Shipyard.

In this regard, decision would be made on merit in light of the detail reports in next meeting, he added.

Those who were present in the meeting were included Provincial Ministers Mir Zahoor Buledi, Mir Shoaib Naushervani, Chief Secretary, Shakeel Qadir Khan, Chairman Gwadar Port Authority, Pasand Khan Buledi, Additional Chief Secretary Development, Abdul Saboor Kakar, Secretary Finance, Babar Khan, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Imran Zarkoon, Special Secretary, Asfandyar Baloch and senior Project Coordinator, Shahzad Hasan Jaffar.

Governor concedes killing of PS Asghar

QUETTA (APP): Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jafar Khan Mandukhel expressed his sorrow over the killing of PS Asghar Ali of Mir Asim Kurd Gello on Wednesday.

In his condemnation statement, he said that it was the responsibility of the government to protect the lives and property of the people.

Governor Balochistan prayed Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal abode with peace and granting courage to bereaved family members.

PML-N to review, amend party constitution

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

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

The Member National Assembly (MNA) Anush Rehman has been appointed as the Secretary of the Amendments Committee.

No member of incumbent federal cabinet drawing salary

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar stated on Wednesday that no member of the incumbent federal cabinet is drawing a salary, as they have all voluntarily decided not to withdraw it. Speaking in the Senate, the minister explained that ministers pay Rs. 143,000 in rent for their single official accommodation and cover the utility bills for their residences themselves. According to the rules, ministers are not entitled to have their utility bills, including gas and electricity, paid by the government, and these bills are covered by them personally.

6 died, 7 injured in road accident

NATHIAGALI (APP): At least six persons on Wednesday died and seven others were injured when a passenger van plunged into a deep gorge at village Leeraan Union Council Nambal, an area of Bokot police station Abbottabad.

While talking to APP Deputy Superintendent Police (DSP) Galyat Muhammad Imtiaz said that a jeep bearing registration No. ARR 859, carrying passengers from Leeraan village Union Council Nambal had been returning after shopping from Azad Kashmir's Kalyaan Bazaar when their vehicle fell into a deep gorge resulting in the loss of lives.

Students complete internships in port management in Gwadar

GWADAR (INP): The students of the Hotel Management and Hospitality department, Pak-China Technical and Vocational Institute (PCT&VI) at University of Gwadar (UoG) have completed their four-month internship at Gwadar Port Authority (GPA) and China Overseas Ports Holding Company (COPHC).

The internship program was designed for the students of Maritime & Port Management to provide them with invaluable hands-on experience and exposure to real-world business operations within the dynamic environment of Gwadar Port.

Under the guidance of industry experts and seasoned professionals, the students had the opportunity to immerse themselves in various aspects of port management, logistics, and maritime operations.

During the internship program, the students actively participated in a wide range of activities, including but not limited to port operations, logistics management, and infrastructure development. Prof. Dr. Syed Manzoor Ahmed, Executive Director of PCT&VI expressed his satisfaction over the successful completion of the internship.

3 previous govts issued thousands of prohibited weapon licences

ISLAMABAD (INP): It has been revealed that thousands of licenses for prohibited weapons have been issued by the Ministry of Interior over the past five and a half years of last three governments.

A total of 50,966 arms licenses were issued during the last governments of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), and caretaker premier Anwaarul Haq Kakar's tenure.

Among these, 23,557 licenses were for prohibited weapons, and 27,409 were for non-prohibited weapons, the sources said.

During the caretaker government, a total of 12,621 licenses were issued in which 9,561 licenses of prohibited weapons and 3,060 licenses of non-prohibited weapons were included. In the previous coalition government of PDM's tenure, a total of 23,052 arms licenses.

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QUETTA: A delegation of PML-N Provincial Ministers and MPs led by Speaker Balochistan Assembly Captain (retd) Abdul Khailq Achakzai meeting with Governor Balochistan Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail.

Salik praises Saudi govt. for excellent Hajj arrangements

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

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

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

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

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

"We held productive discussions on how to further deepen our engagements and especially our cooperation for the Hajj next year", he added.

FIA seeks permission to file extra evidence in cipher case

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

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

The chief justice expressed his concern that the FIA wanted to present extra evidence when the hearing of the appeals was about to complete.



ISLAMABAD: MNA Sardar Yaqoob Khan Nassar meeting with Chairman NHA Arshad Majeed.

Irrigation deptt rebuttal news of corruption in 100 dams project

ISLAMABAD (APP): The spokesman, Irrigation Department has contradicted the report published in a section of press about the corruption and irregularities in the 100 dams project.

In an official press release issued here on Wednesday, the spokesman said that the report published in the media is not correct. The report published in the press was part of the 10-year audit report in which it was stated that there has been corruption and embezzlement in the 100 dams project at big scale.

Although the audit paras mentioned in the reports have already been settled, but these were made part of the report on the basis of misunderstanding among the departments, the spokesman stated.

He further stated that the officers and staff of Irrigation Department were engaged in serving the masses during the 2022 flood situation as a result of which, these paras could not be settled in DAC meeting and thus the issue couldn't be resolved timely.



QUETTA: Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly Ghazala Gola conding with Deputy Consul General of Iran Agha Syed Mehdi Shaiqi on sad demise of Iranian President Dr. Ebrahim Raisi and others.

Govt decision to block SIMs of non-filler still in effect: IHC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) stated on Wednesday that the decision of the federal government pertaining to block the SIMs of non-fillers remained in effect as the injunction of the court was not related to blocking the SIMs of non-fillers.

Chief Justice Amir Farooq Malik of the IHC heard the case against the federal government's decision to block the SIMs of non-fillers.

The federal government has filed a separate petition seeking to lift the stay order on the proceedings against the mobile network companies.

At the onset of the hearing, the chief justice clarified that the stay order was solely to safeguard the petitioner and that the injunction was not to block the SIMs. Therefore, the decision of the federal government was still in effect.

"We can understand that the federal government is focusing on economic reforms.

Tarar shares information of Raof Hasan incident with Senate

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Azam Nazeer Tarar on Wednesday shared details with the Senate regarding the Raof Hasan incident and said that a First Information Report (FIR) had been registered and efforts were underway to apprehend the culprits.

Speaking in the Senate, he said the government is serious in addressing the issue and a special team has been constituted to investigate the incident and arrest those responsible.

He informed the Senate that footage and pictures of the incident have been sent to the forensic lab and the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) for examination to help trace out the culprits. He expressed sorrow over the incident and said that such occurrences should not happen. "The seriousness of the government on the incident should not be questioned.